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U.S. Calls Khartoum Unsafe Because of Terrorists

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 20 — The United States urged Americans today not to travel to Khartoum because the Sudanese capital had become a base for Libyan and other "known terrorists" it said pose "possible threats to American interests."

It was the State Department's strongest public criticism of the Sudanese military government since it toppled the Government of Gaafar al-Nimeiry in a coup last April. The department said that Sudanese authorities had not been responsive to repeated American requests that the terrorists be expelled.

In addition to issuing the travel advisory to Americans, the State Department also said it was reducing the staff of the United States Embassy and other missions in Khartoum by 10 percent. It declined to say how many official American personnel are living in Khartoum. An advisory issued last January warned Americans against traveling to the southern Sudan, where a civil conflict has been going on for several years.

Help on Security Cited

There are believed to be about 600 Americans working and living in the Sudan, many of them attached to charity and refugee organizations aiding the Sudanese in the countryside. The State Department made clear that the advisory did not effect Americans outside Khartoum or in the south.

Charles E. Redman, a State Department spokesman, said that "due to the presence in Khartoum of known terrorists and possible threats to U.S. interests, American citizens are advised to avoid the Sudanese capital."

He added that the Sudanese Government had been cooperative in providing additional security forces to protect the United States Embassy and other official American buildings. "However, it has not responded to our concern about the presence of terrorists,"

he said.

Ever since President Nimeiry was overthrown while returning to the Sudan from a trip to Washington, the Reagan Administration has been increasingly concerned about the reconciliation between Libya and the Sudan.

The Libyan leader, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, had sought the overthrow of Mr. Nimeiry, and since his ouster Libya and the Sudan have restored diplomatic and military relations. The Libyans have also promised to provide oil and munitions to the Sudanese.

Plan Against Libyan Tactics

The United States initially had tried to ensure a smooth working relationship with the military government of Gen. Abdel Rahman Siwar el-Dahab, but officials said these efforts have been frustrated by Libyan moves to inflame opinion in the Sudan against the United States.

The Reagan Administration has regarded Libya as a major base for terrorism in the world. It has broken all ties with Libya and sought to prevent Americans from going to that country. It has also reportedly undertaken a new covert plan to assist neighbors of Libya in combatting what it considers Libyan subversive tactics.

Mr. Redman declined to say what particular threats to American interests the Administration had in mind. In 1973, the United States Ambassador to the Sudan, Cleo Noel, and his departing deputy chief of mission, George Moore, were killed by eight Palestinians who had seized them in the Saudi Arabian Embassy. The Belgian Chief of Mission, Guy Eid, was also slain.

Mr. Nimeiry had close relations with

the United States, although these were strained over his failure to heed American advice for dealing with economic problems. But Mr. Nimeiry, in his last months in office, did agree to American requests that the Sudan allow Ethiopian Jews to travel through en route to Israel. The current Government, seeking to improve relations with Ethiopia as well as Libya, has put some former officials on trial for their part in allowing the Ethiopian Jews to go to Israel.

Chester A. Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, said in a speech last week, the text of which was made available today, that Libya and Ethiopia, both of which are aided by the Soviet Union, were trying "to subvert and frustrate the process of reconciliation and democratization in Sudan."